

Six for Six

by shortystylee

Category: A song of Ice and Fire

Genre: Humor, Romance

Language: English

Characters: Arya S., Gendry

Status: In-Progress

Published: 2016-04-14 18:59:03

Updated: 2016-04-21 22:44:26

Packaged: 2016-04-27 18:04:29

Rating: T

Chapters: 2

Words: 4,532

Publisher: www.fanfiction.net

Summary: Arya was just a few months out from the most important weightlifting meet of her life, the chance to make the Westerosi national team, and prove to everyone that her family's legacy didn't end with her father... she's right on track until her coach announces he's leaving for Braavos and she finds out her "rival" is taking his place.

1. Chapter 1

"Hey, Stark," he called out, walking up to where she stood leaning against the wall. At first it just looked like she was leaning awkwardly against the cinder block wall, face grimacing for no reason, but when he got closer he could see she was using a lacrosse ball to roll out her left shoulder. She had finished watching the rest of her session compete, and afterwards he followed her around to the other side of tall black curtain dividing the competition area from the warm-up area. She'd shrugged out of the shoulders of her grey competition singlet and the straps hung around her thighs, leaving her only in her sports bra from the waist up. It was all he could do to not stare. "Good job on your snatches earlier. Was that last one a competition PR?"

"Yep. Regular PR too," she replied, still mostly focused on her shoulder. "90 kilos."

"Holy crap, that's awesome." She smiled just a bit at that, and Gendry felt better knowing she was at least listening to him. "I'm hoping to PR today too but I'm not sure it'll happen." He was fishing compliments and he knew it.

"Well, I'd say good luck, but since you're my rival and allâ€¦"

"I'm your _what_?"

"You're my rival."

"There's no way I'm your rival."

"How come?" she asked. He wasn't sure if she was actually offended at his assertion or not.

Is she joking right now? "I'm a guy, for starters, and I compete in a weight class that's like, 30 kilos above yours."

"You keep tellin' yourself that, Waters," she replied. She stood up from the wall, tossing and catching the lacrosse ball back and forth between her hands a couple of times, and then looked up at the large digital clock on the wall. "Sorry to cut this short, but I've gotta get in my warm up before the clean and jerks start."

She watched him later on that day, after lunch when the men competed. She'd lost it on her last jerk, a 100 kilo attempt that ended with her not quite getting under the bar quick enough. _Thank the gods for my shoulder mobility_. It was a lift she'd made before, but something felt off today. _Nothing 'off' today for Gendry though_, she thought. _Six for six_. Clean and jerk PR, five kilos heavier on his snatch than at last month's meet. He was good, she knew that. She'd seen him at almost every meet since she started competing. He recovered well, had impeccable form, never pulled too soon, and got under the bar so quickly you could blink and miss it. Friendly, too. Every time they ran into each other he would come over and chat with Arya â€" compliment her lifts that day, ask about her training, and almost always try to steal some snacks from her backpack. Today, he even had a group from his gym there loudly cheering for him after each successful lift, not too surprising since this meet was just outside of Storms End, where she knew he trained. Much different than her when she watched him: sweatpants on, sitting on the ground eating peanut butter directly out of the jar with a soup spoon, muttering whispers of "come on, come on" and "weight in your heels, elbows up, you've got this" under her breath so no one could hear her rooting for him.

He was good, and she could be better. _We're definitely rivals, whether he likes it or not._

****XxXxX****

****Two weeks later.****

Once Arya returned home to Winterfell from the competition in Storms End, she had a day or two off and then it was straight back into training mode. It was only three months until her next competition, one which would contain what might become the most important six lifts of her life up until that point. _Maybe forever_, she thought for a moment, and then shook her head to get those thoughts out, trying not to psych herself out. This meet would determine who would make it to the Westerosi National Team for the next world-wide competition the following summer.

Her father owned the facility she trained at, Stark Strength & Conditioning, which was referred to simply as SSC by almost all the members and the town locals. Ned Stark had made a name for himself in the weightlifting world when he was younger, and so had his father before him. Her oldest brother Robb had played the part of the golden child for a while, when she was too young to compete and he was in

the juniors division, with magazines and reports planting the notion that Robb Stark would be the next to carry on his family's legacyâ€| until the car crash and the back injury and the beautiful nurse, and then suddenly it wasn't worth it anymore. Jon's interest in the sport didn't go farther than just using training as part of an exercise regimen, and Sansaâ€| well, that was definitely not happening.

_Not much pressure at all, right? _

She was working along with a mobility webcast that morning, trying to get that in before the coach showed up at eight. She'd worked with Syrio Forel for the past year or so, and he was nothing if not prompt each and every morning they had scheduled.

This morning he arrived at the same time as always, like clockwork, but, instead of writing out extra training notes for the day or other changes on the whiteboard, he called out to the rest of the athletes to meet him in the so-called lounge area, really just where they kept the boxes for box jumps.

"Alright," he began, clapping his hands together to make sure he had everyone's attention, "before we start our day, I have an announcement to make. I was approached a number of weeks ago by the management for the Braavosi national team. They're beginning their training for the world games and would like a trainer from Braavos. I've already spoken with Mr. Stark and he has accepted my decision to move on. Now, there's no way I would leave you without a coach so close to Nationals, especially with some of you on track to make the team this year. I have hand-selected a new coach, who starting Friday morning, personally recommended by a close friend and â€"

That was all Arya bothered to hear. She stood up from the box she was sitting on and stomped off, knowing full well that she shouldn't have acted like that, running out like a child, and knowing that she'd get a talking-to from Syrio later that day and probably from her father once he heard about her reaction. But thinking before acting was still a trait that she'd yet to perfect, so she tried to control her emotions until she was out of the main room, letting out a loud noise in frustration once the door closed behind her.

"A girl is not pleased with the way things go."

Really, Jagen? Now is not the time. She turned around to see her friend at the water cooler on the other side of the room, red-striped hair pushed back with a wide black headband, shirtless with a pair of Lululemon yoga pants on that were so tight Arya thanked the gods that there were no kids' classes held this early in the morning. _Nothing I've never seen before though_, she thought to herself, trying to hide the smirk that threatened to emerge on her face.

"A girl will chuck a kettlebell at your head when you're not looking if you don't stop bothering me," she replied. "Also, trying talking normally. I know you know how."

He smiled and suddenly changed his tone, almost like he hadn't realized he was speaking with weird grammar or an accent. "Sorry, I just got done with another early AM Lorathi yoga session. You know how it gets, everything is "a man this, a woman that.'" Come on, let's go get you calmed down."

She nodded and started to walk further to the back of the gym, Jagen following just behind, his footfalls quiet where hers are loudly stomping, even without really trying. She sat down on a long bench, leaning back against the wall and he joined her, silently sitting next to her so their shoulders are just touching, then took a hold of her right hand. Arya knew there was nothing _more_ behind the action, at least, not when he's doing it in a comforting way like he was now, and didn't bother to rebuff him. She would if it had been anyone else.

"I know what you're thinking," she said, though he doesn't answer. "You're thinking that I'm 22 godsdamned years old and I just stomped out of there like a five year old that just learned the tooth fairy isn't real."

He didn't say a thing, but Arya knew he was listening; this was just how they did things. He somehow managed to calm her down when she got upset. She'd complain, he'd listen, and when she was done she felt clear-headed, more than ready to go back out there and face whatever it was that had bothered her in the first place. She sat with him for a few moments, five minutes maybe, and he remained quiet, letting her vent the way she needed to.

He only spoke when he heard some weights dropping and movement beginning again in the gym. "Feeling better?" She nodded. "You'd better get back out there then. You'll really be in it if you miss practice."

"Yea, I know." She got up and grabbed her notebook, lifting shoes, belt, and knee sleeves out of her cubby.

"Hey, Arya?" Jagen started. He'd stood up, calling out to her when she was almost out the door. "You can make it to the Nationals team, no matter who's coaching you. Remember that."

"Thanks, Jagen," she said, holding up the door with her backside since her arms will full. "We still on for dinner tonight?"

"Of course. Now get out there and show Syrio who doesn't need him to make it big."

Syrio gave her a disapproving look when she emerged from the back room, as she crossed the gym to look at the whiteboards and make some notes in her journal. For her, there were snatches today, pulls and balances, a complex of power snatches and hang snatches, then front squats and some extra accessory work. Normally, Arya split her day between heavy lifting in the morning and accessory work in the late afternoon, usually working a shift at Indigo Star Coffee & Tea in the middle, mainly to occupy herself with something else and get her out of the gym for a few hours a day. Still a little bit upset, she ignored Syrio's looks as she put in her wireless headphones, turning up the music on her phone and then setting it on the window ledge. _Ya know, Jagen is right_, she thought. _All the groundwork is laid for this already. I've got my sights set pretty high, and this should too if he knows what's good for him— whoever he is._

****Notes****

So, this little AU came into my head and I couldn't shake it. Arya

here is slightly based on Mattie Rogers, a US olympic weightlifting badass, who you should look up if you don't know who she is. Really. The weights I mention for Arya are all feasible for a lifter in her weight class who is on track to make a national team.

And just a little bit of real notes... she's competing in Olympic weightlifting, which only has two lifts, snatch (lol) and clean & jerk (C&J). You get three attempts at each, and your score is the combination of the highest of each lift. The title is the term for completing all six lifts. "PR" is your personal record, and most athletes track their training records as well as what they do in competition.

Lifts mentioned:

>Snatch: floor to overhead in one motion, using a wide grip
>C&J: floor to shoulders (clean), then shoulders to overhead (jerk), with shoulder-width grip

>Snatch pull: used to train the first pull of the lift

>Snatch balance: develops the receiving position of the lift (bar overhead)

I think that's everything now, but just comment if something doesn't make sense.

2. Chapter 2

****Ch2****

****Three months out from National Team Trials****

Training went well for Arya that day, despite the news from Syrio, and even maybe because of it. _It does always feel great to be able to throw these weights around for a while and get out some of that excess emotion_. Her shift at Indigo was just as easy as it usually is. It was an easy job that got her out of the gym and her mind off of her training for a few hours a day, and even though it only paid just above minimum wage, there was a surprising market for noontime coffee in downtown Winterfell, so the tips added up quickly. Hot Pie, her friend she'd known since at least elementary school, but really as long as she could remember, was the assistant manager, and had been partially responsible for helping persuade the owner that they did in fact need an extra barista during the lunch shift.

She got a text from Jagen halfway through work, just after the last of the lunch crowd. It was like clockwork by now. He'd want to hash out their dinner details, sending a barrage of texts letting her know who all was planning on coming to dinner that particular week. Monday night dinners had started out small, but caught on quick once everyone else found out about it. What began as just Arya, Jagen, and a friend or two grilling up a couple burgers and watching YouTube videos on the projector at the gym after all the classes were done, since Arya did have a key and all, had morphed into a weekly party. Even in the coldness of a Winterfell February evening, Jon was still outside, manning the grill with Ygritte leaning up against the concrete wall, the big furry hood of her coat dwarfing her face.

Arya startled slightly when she felt someone sit down next to her at dinner. By that time, almost everyone had heard about her walk-out

that morning, and it seemed like they were all a little standoff-ish, trying to give her time to cool down. She looked to her right and saw Asha Greyjoy next to her. Arya remembered when she'd first moved up north from Pyke about two years ago, all brash attitude and an odd amount of swagger, raw strength to her lifts but lacking the finesse and fine-tuning she'd need if she was really serious about making it to the next level. They'd become fast friends, especially when Asha's search for a roommate turned into Arya moving out of her parents' house and into her unused second bedroom. She was proud of how much Asha had refined her skills since moving to Winterfell to join SSC and get coached by Syrio, but at the same time, Arya was also very glad that her friend was two weight classes above her, so there was no way they'd be vying for the same awards or placements.

"Hey, Ar," she started, and then pulled over a small plyometrics box to set her plate of food on. "Sorry about the bad news today. I totally get that he's Braavosi and all, has to rep for his country, but it's pretty shit timingâ€¦ It's gonna take some getting used to for me too, hellos, he was my first real coach ya know? Before that it was just me fucking around in my garage back on Pykeâ€¦ but you've been training with Syrio longer than any of the rest of us here."

"Yea, it totally blows... Least I've still got everything he's taught me stuck up here," Arya replied, tapping on the side of her head.

"Right? That's exactly what I was trying to tell Dayne earlier, when he picked me up from my massage appointment this morning, but that boy's like talking to a bloody wall sometimes." She paused, taking a drink from the liter of water she always carried, then offered it over to Arya. "I mean, besides, we'll all have a new coach come Friday and all, and I'm sure he'sâ€¦"

"Friday?" she interrupted, trying not to choke on the large drink of water she'd just taken. "The new guy is startingâ€¦ Friday? As in, four days from now."

"Well, yea. Syrio's flight out is Saturday morning. The Braavosi team wanted him to start right away apparently. Dayne told me that was part of the announcement when he picked me up. You didn't know?"

Arya groaned, leaning her head back against the wall. "No, what you might not have heard that I didn't exactly sit through all of Syrio's announcement this morningâ€¦ and then I might've ignored him while I was lifting. Shit, Asha, why does this all have to change so soon?"

"If it didn't happen now you'd be even worse off if they changed later on. It's only three months out 'til the team trials." She shrugged her shoulders, mumbling at Asha that she guessed she was right after all. "Besides, you've been doing awesome this year, and I'm sure that Syrio has picked a new coach that's up to his own ridiculously high standards. Now, come on, finish that burger and then we're gonna sneak off to the backroom, get us some of those brownies that Ygritte made."

"But Sansa will kill me, literally kill me if I fuck up my macros," she explained, then took another forkful of the burger she'd cut up.

"She runs on helluva tight ship and you know that."

"Tell me, Ar, you seen Sansa 'round here this evening?"

"Actually, noâ€|" Arya answered, looking around to take stock of who had joined that evening. A devilish smile grew on her face as her sister was nowhere to be found. She grabbed her paper plate and stood up from her spot quickly, then looked down at Asha and held out her hand. "Screw that, we're getting those brownies now. You know just how to cheer me up."

XxXxX

The weekdays seemed to always blend into each other with the way her schedule was set up. There were some lighter days mixed in amongst the heavier ones, but not much, especially not since she started a building up cycle that would last up to the week before Nationals, allowing her a week to de-load and then peak at the competitionâ€|_well, unless this new coach totally fucks with all my training_, she realized on Wednesday morning. Wednesdays were usually a lighter day for her, still heading to the gym at the same time in the morning, but there was no lifting programmed for her. She started with her mobility webcast, the same as she did every morning, and then would alternate between some cardio on the rower and the core exercises that Syrio changed on the "extra credit" board each day.

Thursday passed quickly, but that was usually the case. Jerks from the boxes, front squats, and push presses consumed her morning lifting session, followed by a shift at Indigo and then afterwards catching a late lunch with Margaery. Although they'd gotten off to a weird start, with Arya not totally feeling the flower-child vibe of her sister's girlfriend, they quickly became close friends and weekly lunch companions once Margaery let her secret snarky side slip out at a Stark family dinner one day, and even more so when it got out that she was also into women's boxing just as much as Arya was, though maybe not for entirely the same reasons.

The gym-wide meeting was held that Friday evening at seven, purposely giving enough time for the morning people to get there after work and the five-thirty pm CrossFit class to finish up and clean up the room. Her father was there, making a number of announcements that would normally have been sent out via email, but she knew he loved it whenever he would get the opportunity to just talk to the full group of members like this. It didn't happen often, maybe only twice a year, the Winter Solstice party and then the Unification Day party each summer. He stood in front of the group, still a commanding figure even in his late 50s, wearing a SSC long-sleeve shirt and faded jeans.

"â€|on top of that, I think everyone will be pleased to hear that we've got a couple of orders for some more equipment scheduled to show up next week. It's looking to be a rather large delivery, and I'd like to get some volunteers to help put everything away and help with some assembly, especially since we're getting three new sets of kilo plates and new racks for the back room. There's also new wrist wraps and speed jump ropes," Ned continued, then paused, smiling when he heard the claps and whistles from a few of the athletes. "Yes, I think are all happy about _that_â€|"

He continued on a few more minutes, Arya not listening terribly close

since the majority of what her father was announcing was already news he'd told her, since he had a habit of letting most of his ideas for the gym bounce off her first, or was information that she was not very interested in. The new coach _still_ hadn't shown up yet, but the murmurs she'd heard so far is that he was flying up that same day and Syrio was out to pick him up at the airport, but no one was exactly sure where he was flying in from. She'd questioned Syrio about it earlier in the week, she couldn't remember which day it was now, but she knew the answer she was going to get from him before she even asked. _No, Arya, I won't tell you my choice. You will need to trust me when I say that I have your best interests in mind._

She was leaned over, slumped on Asha next to her, bored now, and trying not to look too antsy. Her dad was still talking, explaining about the nutritional programming that Sansa was in charge of, the extra costs for anyone interested, and how she is able to tailor the programming so that it would help them to meet their specific goals.

Arya made a loud, surprised noise when the door creaked open, first noticing Syrio come partially inside, holding the door open at the same time as he stomped snow off his boots.

"Oh, here they are now," Ned stated. "Get lost on the way back from the airport, Syrio?"

Her head whipped off Asha's shoulder, faster than she knew she could move, and she thought she heard Syrio give some complaint about airport traffic, but her full attention was now being aimed at the front door, first going to where Syrio was still loudly kicking the snow clumps off his boots. Her eyes moved over to the new coach who walked in behind him, much taller than Syrio, dressed in a large puffy winter jacket with a furry hood that was still over his face. When he finally reached up, pushed the hood back and then unzipped the coat, she noticed familiar eyes, dark hair that was bit too long, and she thought that he's an uncanny reminder of someone she knew—until she shifted her eyes down slightly and her mind finally kicked into gear, taking full note of the large text that was screen-printed across the front of his hoodie.

_Storms End Barbell Club. _

It only took him getting three steps closer for it finally cement in her that she knew him, knew _exactly_ who this was, but then her father was already introducing him to everyone.

No, no, no. Shit, she thought. _It can't be him—he's only a few years older than me. Is he even a coach?_

"Everyone, I'd like to introduce our new weightlifting coach, Gendry Waters."

Guess so.

She didn't think he'd seen her yet, thankfully. His eyes busily scanned his new surroundings, going over to the rack of barbells that hung off the far wall, flicking across to the large whiteboard of gym PRs, and then to the line of rowers, before finally settling on the group of athletes setting on the ground, then narrowing in on Arya. He had a cheeky smile on his face as he watched her while Ned

finished up the introductions, then let everyone know about the food in the backroom that Catelyn had made.

He knew about this, she realized. _I just saw him two weeks ago at that Storms End meet, and he knew this was going to happen. That's why he's got this shit-eating grin on his face._

He'd said nothing at all to her at the meet in Storms End, nothing about this at least. Sure, she wasn't best friends with him, her rival, but she'd think he'd mention something as big as this. She tried to think back to two weeks ago and what they'd even talked about.

_"Hey, Starkâ€¦ good job on your snatches earlier." _

_"Holy crap, that's awesomeâ€¦ I'm hoping to PR today too but I'm not sure it'll happen." _

"Well, I'd say good luck, but since you're my rival and allâ€¦"

_"Gendry, what are you doing? Stop stealing protein bars from my backpack, you ass! My mom made those." _

_"Seriously? You're so lucky. I'd love the chance to have these every single day." _

She had to stop herself from smiling at the last memory, since he'd probably think she was smiling at him.

She thought he would've walked straight up to her after her father was done talking, especially with how he'd kept his eyes on her the whole time, but as she stood up and prepared herself for a conversation she really didn't want to have, she noticed he was being overwhelmed by a large group. Though her father was speaking to one of the CrossFit coaches, Syrio was still there, along with Jaen, a couple other lifters, and a small gaggle of girls who she figured thought he was attractive.

A moment later, Asha walked up, yawning widely, and asked if Arya also wanted to head home for some real dinner. She agreed enthusiastically, _thank the gods for Asha Greyjoy_, but as they walked towards the backroom to grab their bags and sneak out the back door to where her car was parked, Arya felt his eyes on her as she left. _I'll deal with this mess in the morning. _

End
file.